

Before, during, and after the PPT  
6/11/2012

**Before the IEP meeting:**

- Obtain a complete copy of the student's educational records, including cumulative file, confidential file, and all other documents that include the student's personally identifiable information. Note that some states require that the request for records be in writing.
- If this is a parent-requested meeting, send a letter or email to the school requesting an IEP meeting to be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time. You may want to propose three days/times for the meeting. If you are bringing an advocate, private consultant, or other individual, first be sure they are available at these times.
- If this is a school-requested meeting and if you cannot meet at the school-proposed time, send a letter or email stating this, proposing additional times, and stating that you would like to participate in the meeting. (I.e., the school team should not hold the IEP meeting without you.)
- Identify the purpose of the meeting. Ask the school team what they intend to propose at the meeting and identify what parents hope to accomplish.
- Send a written request to school team that parents receive all draft goals, reports, and any other written materials to be discussed at the meeting at least several days in advance. (E.g., many families request that they receive these materials at least five school days in advance of the meeting.) If you do not receive the materials in time, consider sending a written request to reschedule the meeting, in order to ensure you have adequate opportunity to prepare.
- If you have questions about the reports, draft goals, or other materials, consider speaking with the relevant person prior to the IEP meeting. You may also ask questions at the IEP meeting.
- Review the meeting invitation from the school to ensure that all necessary school team members are attending the meeting. If not, send a written request to the school that additional people be included.
- Decide whether or not your child should attend the meeting.
- Review government resources that may support your requests. E.g., relevant sections of the state and federal regulations, state guidelines, policy guidance from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), etc. Much of this information is online.
- Develop a written parent agenda that describes (1) your perception of the student's present levels (needs and strengths), (2) your requests for goals or goal areas and how progress should be measured, (3) requests for services, (4) request for

accommodations/modifications, and (5) request for placement. If there is support for your requests in the student's records or in government resources, reference these in your agenda. Consider sharing the parent agenda with the school team prior to the IEP meeting (recommended).

- If you are not sure about the student's needs, plan to request that the school team conduct an evaluation. If the school team has already conducted an evaluation and you disagree with it, plan to request an independent educational evaluation. (See IDEA's procedural safeguards.)
- If you are bringing an advocate, a private consultant, or other individual to the IEP meeting, be sure to speak with them in advance to ensure you understand their perspective and are on the same page.
- If you are tape recording the meeting (recommended) and/or if you are bringing others to the meeting, send the district a letter or email to let them know in advance.

**At the IEP meeting:**

- Arrive at least a few minutes in advance of the meeting.
- Bring with you a copy of the most recent IEP, any materials to be discussed at the meeting, and the most recent evaluations.
- Be professional and treat school team members with respect, even if you disagree with them.
- If the school team brings written materials to the meeting that you have not received, consider requesting that the IEP meeting be rescheduled to a time that you have had sufficient opportunity to review the materials.
- At the IEP meeting, clearly state your perceptions and make requests.
- If you disagree with something said by the school team, clearly state, "I respectfully disagree."
- If you need more time to consider a district proposal, state this and ask to reconvene the meeting.
- Remember that you are an equal member of the IEP team and have a right/responsibility to understand your child's program. Be sure you understand the school team's perception of your child's needs. Be sure you understand the proposed IEP goals and how progress will be measured. Be sure to ask who, what, where, when, why, and why not about any key pieces of the IEP.
- Summarize what you have heard. E.g., "It sounds like we agree to include X in the IEP." Or "it sounds like you disagree with my request for X."

- If the District denies a request, ask for Prior Written Notice to help you understand the basis for the refusal. (See IDEA's procedural safeguards.)
- If you run out of time before all requests are made, ask that the District reconvene the meeting.
- Generally, do not sign anything at the meeting. Let the District know you will review materials to be signed and will send back the form promptly.
- Be sure to leave the IEP meeting with any drafts or other written materials that were presented or developed at the meeting.

**After the IEP meeting:**

- Draft a polite thank-you-for-the-meeting letter to the school team describing important areas of agreement and disagreement. "If it's not in writing, it never happened." Request that this be attached to the IEP, as it represents your parent input.
- Review the IEP and note any inaccuracies. If any exist, promptly send a polite follow-up letter to the school requesting that the IEP be revised.
- If the school team has refused any important requests at the meeting, consider filing for a due process hearing, requesting mediation, or filing a state complaint.
- If IEP services are not implemented promptly or if you have concerns about the program's appropriateness, immediately send written notification to the school.